

**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

**Fall Session August 28-December 19, 2017**

**PHI 101 TA1, Introduction to Philosophy**

**David G Limbaugh**

M W F, 12:00 - 12:50 PM

Class #: 19336

Examines general topics in various areas of philosophy showing different sides of issues; develops critical thought and philosophical method.

**PHI 101 TA2, Introduction to Philosophy**

**David G Limbaugh**

T TH 8:00 – 9:20 AM

Class #: 23394

Examines general topics in various areas of philosophy showing different sides of issues; develops critical thought and philosophical method.

**PHI 101 TA3, Introduction to Philosophy**

**Michael P Moran**

M W F, 11:00 – 11:50 AM

Class #: 23395

Examines general topics in various areas of philosophy showing different sides of issues; develops critical thought and philosophical method.

**PHI 105 Contemporary Moral Problems**

**Professor Ryan Muldoon**

T TH, 9:30 – 10:50 AM

Class #: 21129

Are sweatshops exploitative, or the best means we have of lifting people out of poverty? Do we even owe moral consideration to people who are far away from us? Are there limits to what should be sold in the market? Are there limits to our rights to free speech? Is pornography harmful? In a world of increasing diversity, what obligations do we have to overcome our own biases about others? Is accommodating the moral and religious beliefs of others an infringement of the free exercise of our own beliefs? In this course, we will investigate these and other questions, with the goal of understanding how we fit into an increasingly complex moral environment. We will explore these contemporary challenges

using not just our life experiences, but drawing on the tools that moral philosophy provides. This course will expose you to methods of reasoning that can help you decide how to respond to a wide array of contemporary moral challenges.

This course will philosophically examine contentious moral issues of the day. Among the topics that may be discussed are abortion, capital punishment, affirmative action, obligations of wealthy nations to poor nations, duties to non-human animals, vegetarianism, sex workers, pornography, legalized gambling and lotteries, gun control, drone warfare, human enhancements through drugs and prostheses, homosexual marriage, racial profiling, and legalization of currently illegal drugs.

### **PHI 107 DON, Introduction to Ethics**

**Professor Maureen Donnelly**

T TH 9:30 – 10:50 AM

Class #: 20975

The course introduces value theory, good and bad, justification of obligations to others, relationship of free choice and determinism, and contemporary moral problems analyzed by ethical principles.

Nearly everyone assumes that some human actions are morally good (or at least morally permissible), while other actions are morally wrong. However, there is often considerable disagreement over the moral worth of particular actions. The primary purpose of this class is to examine different principles which have been advocated for distinguishing between morally acceptable and morally unacceptable actions. Special attention will be paid to principles which are based on substantial philosophical arguments and which purport to be independent of specific cultural practices. We will also consider: i) the extent of a person's responsibility for his or her actions and ii) what reasons can be given for choosing good actions and refraining from bad actions. Students should expect regular readings from historical and contemporary sources. Grades are based on written homework, regular class participation, and examinations. No prior background in philosophy is required for this course.

### **PHI 107 KIN Introduction to Ethics**

**Professor Devlin Russell**

M W F, 10:00 – 10:50 AM

Class #: 23396

How do we live more ethical lives? This course will use philosophical theory to help us answer this question. First, we will look at how ethical reasoning works and try to find the best ethical principles to reason from. We will then consider whether this is all just 'subjective' or whether there is a more plausible objective basis for ethics. And finally we will apply our results to some pressing ethical problems. In short, we will ask 'what is ethics, where does it come from, and how can it practically guide us?'

### **PHI 107 TA4, Introduction to Ethics**

**Angela G. Menditto**

T R, 11:00 AM – 12:20 PM

Class #: 23397

Introduces value theory, good and bad, justification of obligations to others, relationship of free choice and determinism, and contemporary moral problems analyzed by ethical principles.

### **PHI 115 TA6, Critical Thinking**

**Botan Dolun**

M W F, 1:00 PM - 1:50 PM

Class #: 23399

Examines techniques of problem solving, decision making, and evaluating pros and cons of an issue; organizing data; forming strategies and giving reasons; perceptual, cultural, emotional, intellectual, and expressive blocks to thinking; and simple inductive reasoning and statistical fallacies.

### **PHI 162 Law, Authority, and Morality**

**Professor Ryan Muldoon**

T TH, 2:00 – 3:20 PM

Class #: 21130

What is the law? Why does it have authority over us? What relationship does the law have with morality? These are timeless questions, and we will look at them through a contemporary lens. This course will be divided into three parts. In the first part of the course, we will survey the philosophical literature on the authority of the law, and its sources of political and moral justification. We will learn about why we have the law, and how it is meant to structure the relations between citizens and state.

In the second section, we will explore what happens when the law is out of step with prevailing social norms. For instance, if nobody else follows the law, should you? What really commands our loyalty? Are laws legitimate if no one pays attention to them? In the final part of the course, we will explore what happens when the law is used for illegitimate ends. We will focus on cases of racially discriminatory laws and discriminatory enforcement of otherwise neutral laws. We will look at such issues as laws governing housing, civil asset forfeiture, and stop and frisk. We will also pay particular attention to the events that sparked the Black Lives Matter movement to see what philosophical lessons we can draw.

The goals for this course are to connect the abstract ideals of the authority of the law with the lived reality that we see around us.

### **PHI 199 GRA, UB Seminar - Race and Ethnicity**

**Distinguished Professor Jorge J. E. Gracia**

W, 4:00 - 6:40 PM

Class #: 23402

What is race? What is ethnicity? What is nationality? What is the relation between race, ethnicity and nationality? What are racial, ethnic, and national identities? How are these

identities related to personal identity? Can the same person have several identities? How are racial, ethnic, and national groups individuated? How can we tell that someone belongs to a particular racial, ethnic, or national group? Does belonging to these groups entail particular rights? Do ethnic groups have linguistic rights? Are social groups entitled to reparations for past wrongs committed against members of the groups? Can affirmative action policies with respect to racial, ethnic, or national groups be justified? How are race and ethnicity manifested in cultural phenomena, such as philosophy, literature, and art? These are some of the questions we intend to explore in this course. The readings come from the writings of authors who have recently staked out important, and sometimes controversial, positions on these issues.

The three credit UB Seminar is focused on a big idea or challenging issue to engage students with questions of significance in a field of study and, ultimately, to connect their studies with issues of consequence in the wider world. Essential to the UB Curriculum, the Seminar helps students with common learning outcomes focused on fundamental expectations for critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and oral communication, and learning at a university, all within topic focused subject matter. The Seminars provide students with an early connection to UB faculty and the undergraduate experience at a comprehensive, research university. This course is equivalent to any 199 offered in any subject. This course is a controlled enrollment (impacted) course. Students who have previously attempted the course and received a grade of F or R may not be able to repeat the course during the fall or spring semester.

### **PHI 199 DON, UB Seminar - Philosophy In Literature**

**Professor Maureen Donnelly**

T R, 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM

Class #: 22081

Literary works often deal with important philosophical issues. For example, many narratives are structured around underlying ethical distinctions between good and bad actions or between good and bad character traits. In addition, many narratives raise questions about human nature or the structure of the world in which we live and act. The purpose of this class is to consider how a general philosophical issue might be investigated through a work of literature. We will read both philosophy texts and literary texts, using the philosophy texts first for a basis understanding of a particular issues and then comparing the treatment of that philosophical issue in a selection of literary works.

We focus initially on questions of human freedom. What does it mean for human beings to be free to direct their lives and choose to commit, or refrain from committing, particular actions? Is the world structured in a way that allows for human freedom? Is freedom a requirement for moral responsibility? The second half of the course focuses on ethical issues. What sorts of actions are morally permissible? What sorts of actions are morally impermissible? What sorts of habits or personality traits characterize morally virtuous people? What sorts of habits or personality traits characterize morally degenerate people? How, generally, should we live? What are the attributes of a good life? Particular philosophical texts used in the course include selections from Aristotle, Epictetus, Boethius, Kant, and Bentham. Literary readings include works of Sophocles, Henry James, David Thoreau, and Benjamin Franklin.

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### **PHI 199 BOM, UB Seminar - Living Well**

**Professor Nicolas Bommarito**

M W F, 11:00 - 11:50 AM

Class #: 22078

This course explores the question of what it means to live well and some of the obstacles to living well from a philosophical point of view. Students will become familiar with classic ideas of philosophers like Aristotle and Zhuangzi, but also more contemporary work. We will examine issues relevant to becoming a university student like procrastination and note-taking from a practical point of view with an eye to solving common obstacles to living well. We will also critically examine the underlying concepts. For example, considering how procrastination relates to theories of rationality and the ideas of memory and originality that are involved in academic writing.

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### **PHI 199 LAW, UB Seminar - Morality, Reality, and the Meaning of TV**

**Professor James Lawler**

M W F, 12:00 - 12:50 PM

Class #: 22080

Contemporary television programs and films often involve the same issues, questions and probing reflections that philosophers have explored since the time of Plato: How do we know what is a morally right action? How do we know whether something is real, or only a dream or illusion? Is there more to reality than what we can experience with our senses? Do individuals have a purpose or destiny as a result of external conditions or forces, or is this a matter for individuals themselves to decide?

Bringing together pop culture and philosophy is beneficial to both sides. Stories told with skill and imagination in popular culture provide compelling illustrations of ideas treated abstractly and systematically by philosophers. Connecting popular culture with the concepts developed by philosophers makes the concepts seem less abstract, more real. At the same time, in recognizing the presence of profound conceptual content in the works of pop culture, we will take these works more seriously—as more than mere entertainment. Often, the best of pop culture provides explorations that take philosophical ideas to unexpected levels, and so provide fresh stimulus for deeper philosophical reflection. Bringing together some of the most prominent works in contemporary popular culture with relevant classical texts from the history of philosophy is both entertaining and intellectually fruitful.

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Prerequisites: Students who have already successfully completed the first year seminar course may not repeat this course. If you have any questions regarding enrollment for this course, please contact your academic advisor.

### **PHI 215 BIT, Symbolic Logic**

**Professor Thomas Bittner**

M W F , 12:00 - 12:50 PM

Class #: <<>>

Introduces the formal techniques of deductive reasoning.

*Note: Students must register in PHI215 to get this section.*

### **PHI 215 R1, Symbolic Logic**

**Scott Luan**

W , 8:00 - 8:50 AM

Class #: 22591

Introduces the formal techniques of deductive reasoning.

*Note: Registering in this section will automatically place you in PHI 215LR BIT LEC*

**PHI 215 R2, Symbolic Logic**

**Scott Luan**

R, 8:00 - 8:50 AM

Class #: 22592

Introduces the formal techniques of deductive reasoning.

*Note: Registering in this section will automatically place you in PHI 215LR BIT LEC*

**PHI 234 Environmental Ethics**

**Professor Devlin Russell**

T R, 12:30 - 1:50 PM

Class #: 23430

How should we, as a society, live with our environment? Is it wrong for us to be a meat-eating society? Is it wrong for Americans to consume natural resources at the rate we do? How does the threat of climate change bear on our present behaviour? In this course, we will use philosophical theory to think hard about the answers to these questions.

**PHI 237 HOV, Medical Ethics: Social & Ethical Values in Medicine**

**Professor David Hershenov**

M W F, 2:00 - 2:50 PM

Class #: 23425

The course is designed both to provide moral guidance to future medical professionals as well to enable citizens to develop informed and reasonable positions on the most important bioethical issues of the day. Students will become familiar with the leading arguments on both sides of the following contemporary bioethical controversies: abortion, euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, organ transplants, human cloning, commercial surrogate motherhood, advanced directives, informed consent, and the definition and criterion of death.

The readings are chosen to provide opposing positions. Each topic covered will have a second author arguing against the position defended in the first reading, usually commenting on the very author and essay just read. Even if students don't switch sides on an issue due to the course readings, lectures and discussions, the hope is that they will not only be able to give a stronger defense of their own positions but will also come to better appreciate the considerations that favor the opposing side. This might play a small role in making public debate more civil and reasonable.

The methodologies employed in the class should make students more aware of their own values, perhaps revealing to them commitments of which they were previously unaware. Students will learn how to construct philosophical arguments and critically read philosophy essays. All the required reading will be made available through the library electronic course reserve.

**PHI 237 OLC, Medical Ethics: Social & Ethical Values in Medicine**

**Harjeet S. Parmar**

ONLINE

Class #: 24198

Examines current ethical positions and their application to ethical and social questions in medicine.

*Note: This course is conducted entirely online, including any exams the course might include. At no time will this course require students to be present on campus.*

**PHI 237 ONL, Medical Ethics: Social & Ethical Values in Medicine**

**Andrew Pfeuffer**

ONLINE

Class #: 24789

Examines current ethical positions and their application to ethical and social questions in medicine.

*Note: This course is conducted entirely online, including any exams the course might include. At no time will this course require students to be present on campus.*

**PHI 237 SMI, Medical Ethics: Social & Ethical Values in Medicine**

**Jacob Monaghan**

T R, 12:30 – 1:50 PM

Class #: 23610

Examines current ethical positions and their application to ethical and social questions in medicine.

**PHI 237 TA1, Medical Ethics: Social & Ethical Values in Medicine**

**Shane K Hemmer**

M W F, 11:00 – 11:50 AM

Class #: 18473

Examines current ethical positions and their application to ethical and social questions in medicine.

**PHI 237 TA4, Medical Ethics: Social & Ethical Values in Medicine**

**Uriah Burke**

T R, 11:00 AM – 12:20 PM

Class #: 22094

Examines current ethical positions and their application to ethical and social questions in medicine.

**PHI 237 TA7, Medical Ethics: Social & Ethical Values in Medicine**



**Joshua Merlo**

M W F, 8:00 - 8:50 AM

Class #: 23426

Examines current ethical positions and their application to ethical and social questions in medicine.

**PHI 260 Ancient Philosophy**

**Michael P Moran**

M W F, 2:00 - 2:50 PM

Class #: 21006

Reviews the history of Greek philosophy from Pre-Socratic philosophers to the Hellenistics.

**PHI 270 Early Modern Philosophy**

**Professor Louis M. Powell**

T, R, 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM

Class# 23431

Reviews the history of metaphysics and epistemology from the Renaissance to Kant.

**PHI 320 Philosophy of Mind**

**Professor David Braun**

T R, 12:30 - 1:50 PM

Class #: 23432

Introduction to the philosophy of mind, emphasizing both historically significant and contemporary discussion of the relationship between mind and the material world.

We will discuss some fundamental questions about the nature of minds and mental states, and what is sometimes known as “the mind-body problem”. Are minds and mental states physical or non-physical in nature? Are mental states just complex dispositions to behave in certain ways? Are mental states identical with certain kinds of brain states? In what respect (if any) is a mind like a computer?

Could a purely physical object be conscious? How can a mental state represent something, or be *about* something? Could a physical state of a brain or computer do this? Our consideration of these questions will begin with arguments for and against several theories of the nature of minds and mental states, including dualism, materialism, behaviorism, and functionalism. The course will emphasize readings in contemporary philosophical literature.

Pre-requisite: One prior course in philosophy.

Requirements (tentative): Two papers and two exams. The second exam will occur during the final exam period.

**PHI 329 Metaphysics**  
**Professor Neil E. Williams**  
T R, 9:30 - 10:50 AM  
Class #: 21007

Metaphysics is concerned with the most fundamental categories of existence. These include events, particulars, properties, persons, facts, and so on. The best way to approach metaphysics is through the consideration of certain problems; as one begins to think about how best to solve these problems, the connections between the many metaphysical problems become clear.

Our aim in the course is to consider answers to, and methodologies employed in answering, the question: what is there? With that in mind, this course will pay close attention to five major metaphysical issues (universals; particulars; time; causation; persistence) but in so doing we are likely to touch on most of the topics that fall within the range of metaphysics.

Students are required to have taken at least one previous philosophy course to register. Given the content of the course, more than one previous course is highly recommended.

**PHI 345 Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art**  
**Professor Devlin Russell**  
M W F, 12:00 - 12:50 PM  
Class #: 22089

Art and its appreciation are everywhere. Human life would be unrecognizable without it. This is especially true if we construe art broadly to include popular art and craft. Why does it matter so much to us? This course will use philosophical theory to help us answer this question. First, we will try to narrow in on our subject matter (art), then look at various aspects of appreciation, and finally uncover the special features of some individual arts (like literature, film, and music).

Undergraduate Tutorial Sections:

PHI 401 Philosophy Honors Tutorials

PHI 498 Philosophy Undergraduate Research Activity

PHI 499 Philosophy Undergraduate Tutorials

*Meeting days and times as arranged with professors.*